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# HEAL THE BAY SUES BIG PLASTIC

09.23.2024 | Heal the Bay



News

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Plastic Pollution

(<https://healthebay.org/pollution/>)

Press Release

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## Heal the Bay Sues Big Plastic

Heal the Bay today took historic legal action to put an end to one of the existential threats facing our local beaches and ocean – plastic pollution.

We have joined a coalition of leading environmental groups in filing a lawsuit ([https://healthebay.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/15193\\_2024-09-23-COMPLAINT.pdf](https://healthebay.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/15193_2024-09-23-COMPLAINT.pdf)) against ExxonMobil, the world's largest producer of single-use plastic polymers. California's Attorney General also filed a similar lawsuit today.

For the past 40 years, we've hosted tens of thousands of beach cleanups in L.A. County. Our volunteers have removed over 2 million pounds of plastic-strewn trash from our shorelines and inland



Today, we say "No more!"

**Ex. 1A**

## What legal action did Heal the Bay take today?

The coalition complaint, filed in San Francisco Superior Court, alleges violations of California’s nuisance law and unfair competition law. In the suit, the plaintiffs argue there must be corporate accountability for a decades-long campaign to bury the truth about the known environmental, economic and human health impacts caused by plastics.

The bold action harkens back to Heal the Bay’s first victory in 1990, when it successfully secured a legal settlement with the City of Los Angeles to stop dumping partially treated sewage into the Bay from its Hyperion wastewater treatment facility.

## Who else is backing the lawsuits against ExxonMobil?

For months, Heal the Bay’s policy staff has been quietly meeting with our peers at Surfrider Foundation, the Sierra Club and San Francisco Baykeeper. Today’s action marks the first step in a coordinated campaign to legally hold Big Oil accountable for the production of wasteful and harmful single-use plastics.

In April 2022, California Attorney General Rob Bonta launched an investigation into ExxonMobil (and other fossil fuel industry giants) for their role in the plastic pollution problem. Based on those findings, Bonta’s office today filed a concurrent lawsuit against Big Plastic. This marks a more aggressive approach to stop plastic pollution at its source rather than merely remediating it.

## What are the environmental harms created by ExxonMobil?

As alleged in the complaint, ExxonMobil-produced polymer resins are responsible for over 6 million metric tons of plastic waste annually — equivalent to the weight of 300,000 garbage trucks. Polymers are used to produce so-called “nurdles.” These BB-sized plastic pellets are the building blocks of such wasteful and harmful single-use items as bags, water bottles and snack packaging. This debris winds up contaminating our environment and our bodies at every stage of its



product lifecycle. By 2050, there will be more plastic in the world's oceans than fish, according to some studies ([https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_The\\_New\\_Plastics\\_Economy.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_The_New_Plastics_Economy.pdf)).

## **Why can't we just do a better job of recycling single-use plastics?**

Even with recycling programs in place for decades, less than 5% of domestic plastic is recycled into another plastic product, despite being labeled as "recyclable." The vast majority of plastics end up littering our public places, winding up in overtaxed landfills, or floating in garbage vortexes in our oceans.



(<https://healthebay.org/heal-the-bay-sues-big-plastic/trash-on-beach/>)



(<https://healthebay.org/heal-the-bay-sues-big-plastic/olympus-digital-camera-18/>)

## **What are the ties between single-use plastics and the worsening climate crisis?**

Given falling demand for gasoline as electric cars proliferate, plastics will be the greatest growth market for Big Oil in the next decade.

Plastic production and disposal are also a significant contributor to ever-worsening climate change, responsible for roughly 3% (<https://ourworldindata.org/ghg-emissions-plastics>) of all carbon emissions worldwide. The doubling of plastics production in the next two decades will contribute to the wildfires, famine and heat stroke that jeopardize the lives of millions.



## How has plastic harmed our bodies?

Plastic pollution never biodegrades. Instead, plastic pollution breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces — sometimes referred to as microplastics. Avoiding microplastics in our daily lives is virtually impossible. It is in our drinking water, it is in the food we eat, and it is even in the air we breathe.

Over the course of a lifetime, the average person will unknowingly consume more than 40 pounds of plastic (<https://www.reuters.com/graphics/ENVIRONMENT-PLASTIC/0100B4TF2MQ/index.html>). Microplastics have been found in human blood, heart tissue, placentas, and even breast milk.



A Heal the Bay volunteer sorts through plastic pollution on a Southern California beach.

## How can our

## supporters help?

Today's filing is just the first step in what could be a years-long legal fight. Just as with our victory at Hyperion, a steady application of grassroots pressure will be required to force deep-pocketed Big Oil to change its harmful practices.

We will be calling on all our supporters in the coming months to add their voices to the chorus of everyday people fed up with single-use

We will also need the financial assistance of donors

**Ex. 1A**





## What are the next steps?

In the next few months, Heal the Bay’s science and policy team will continue to gather data to hold Big Oil’s feet to the fire.

**DONATE TO SUPPORT THIS LEGAL ACTION**  
(<https://donate.healthebay.org/campaign/stop-big-plastic/c621334>)

**Today is just the first day in a long fight.**

*To receive regular updates on how you can make your voice heard, please click here ([https://healthebay.my.site.com/form/s/newsletter?language=en\\_US](https://healthebay.my.site.com/form/s/newsletter?language=en_US)).*

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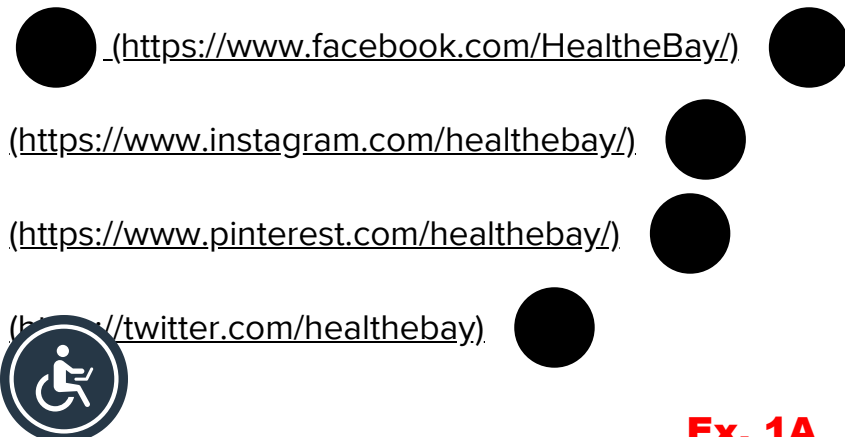
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